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From the Office of the Director of Health

Expanded Hours Offered for HIV Testing on National HIV Testing Day

The Springfield-Greene County Health Department in partnership with AIDS Project of the Ozarks (APO) supports National HIV Testing Day on June 27th with no cost, walk-in testing clinics at two Springfield locations.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that one third of all individuals with HIV do not know they are HIV positive. Health Department HIV case manager Caryn Burk says, "A person can be infected with HIV and live with the virus for many years without symptoms and may feel healthy. On National HIV Testing Day we encourage individuals to get a test and find out their HIV status. By knowing their status they can take steps to protect their own health and the health of others."

Burk adds, "Improvements in antiviral treatment for HIV are keeping people healthy longer, while allowing them to take fewer pills and experience fewer side effects. Starting HIV treatment may also prevent a person from developing AIDS."

On June 27th the health department will offer HIV testing at no cost from 8:00am – 10:00am and again from 1:00pm – 3:00pm at the City Clinic, 227 East Chestnut Expressway. AIDS Project of the Ozarks will offer no cost testing at a walk-in clinic from 8:00am – 8:00pm at 1901 East Bennett. Both agencies offer no cost testing year-round to southwest Missouri residents.

APO Executive Director Lynne Meyerkord says, "According to the CDC the number of Americans living with HIV/AIDS increased twenty-five percent between 2002 and 2003. There are now more than one million people living with the disease. In addition, the CDC estimates that 180,000-280,000 people nationwide are HIV-positive and don't know it. Individuals need to be tested in order to begin treatment."

The Springfield-Greene County Health Department and AIDS Project of the Ozarks join others around the nation June 27th in encouraging individuals to "Take the test. Take control. Get tested for HIV."

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